

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only  
received  
date entered

**1. Name**

historic Old Main Building, North Park College

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 3235 West Foster Avenue

*N/A* not for publication

city, town Chicago *N/A* vicinity of congressional district 11th

state Illinois code 012 county Cook code 031

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<i>N/A</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Board of Trustees of North Park College and Theological Seminary

street & number 5125 North Spaulding Avenue

city, town Chicago ~~MEMPHIS~~ state Illinois 60625

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cook County Recorder of Deeds

street & number 118 North Clark Street

city, town Chicago state Illinois

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Inventory of Historic Structures—Chicago/North Park  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state IL

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Old Main is located on the northern portion of the North Park College campus, located on the northwest side of Chicago immediately south and west of one of the major arterial intersections in the area--Foster Avenue (5200 North) and North Kedzie Avenue (3200 West).

It is in the Georgian revival style and is three stories high with a raised high basement. The street facade (north side of building) is divided into three vertical sections each with a dormer projecting from the hip roof line. The building is also symmetrical about an axis through the main entrance. The building is 91.58 feet long and 56.58 feet wide, and is rectangular.

It is a load-bearing wall brick structure built of common brick on an eight foot high rough limestone base. It has rough hewn wood timber joists and beams and wooden scissor trusses supporting the roof, though the first floor has been recently reinforced with steel columns.

The center section of the north facade contains the main entrance which is on a raised wooden porch partially covered by a roof with a wooden balustrade above. This porch roof is supported by two pair of flanked ionic columns. The second floor of this center section features a pair of double hung windows with a full semi-circular fan light. Above is a stone inscription band which reads SEMC COLLEGE -- meaning Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant College, the original name of North Park College. The three gable pediments were originally decorated with wooden bas relief ornament.

The eaves of the main roof are decorated with an egg and dart motif, while the dormer eaves have dentals. On top of the main roof is an open octagonal bell tower formed out of paired ionic columns, though bells were never hung in it. The original tower was damaged in a storm in the early 1960s and was replaced with another in August, 1965, which did not exactly duplicate the original since the original blueprints were not available, but it is remarkably close.

The original windows were single panes in a double-hung, movable sash; these were replaced by the present 9 over 9 double-hung, movable sash sometime during the late 1920s. Because of the City of Chicago Building and Fire Codes and changes in occupancy of the building, fire escapes were added to the south and east sides of the building sometime during the late 1920s.

Available evidence indicates that no major changes have ever been made to the exterior of the building and no structural changes have ever been made to the interior since its construction in 1893-94. Over the years, substantial interior partition changes have been made to adapt the building to various spatial uses required by the College. The integrity of the building is nearly perfect.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below		landscape architecture	religion
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1893-1894

Builder/Architect J.A. Modin

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Old Main, built in 1893-94 in an academic Georgian style by a Swedish contractor named J.A. Modin with a cornerstone laying ceremony on September 26, 1893 and dedication on June 16, 1894. (The name of the architect, if any, who designed it is still unknown and in all likelihood it was probably designed by the contractor and/or a committee of what was then known as SEMC College -- Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant College.) It is the first building on the campus of what was to become North Park College and Theological Seminary and became the center of interest early on because it was the first large building in the North Park area of Chicago.

Later, during the early days of commercial air flights in the 1920s, the Cupola on top of Old Main was electrically lighted and came to serve as a guiding mark for pilots flying over Chicago's north side.

For 87 years thousands of College, Seminary, and Academy students have made it their campus landmark because it has served as classroom space, Library and reading room, and chapel; and today is used as a school for emotionally handicapped children. To this day, because it faces Foster Avenue at the intersection of Sawyer Avenue (3234 West), Old Main commands attention among the diverse buildings which now make up the present-day campus.

For many years it was the site for the Annual Meeting of the Covenant Church of America where delegates would assemble from throughout the nation to establish church policy.

Its local significance is derived from the fact that because it was one of the first large buildings in Chicago built for a Swedish organization, it has become a landmark for the Swedish ethnic and cultural social life of not only its neighborhood, Chicago, and the Covenant Church, but for Swedes throughout the Country. Alumni of the college who are now located throughout the country lovingly consider Old Main to be their symbol of "Alma Mater".

The college administration now intends to house its administrative offices in the building and also to have its archives and that of the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society there.

Old Main symbolizes the Swedish culture and Covenant Church in Chicago.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 4

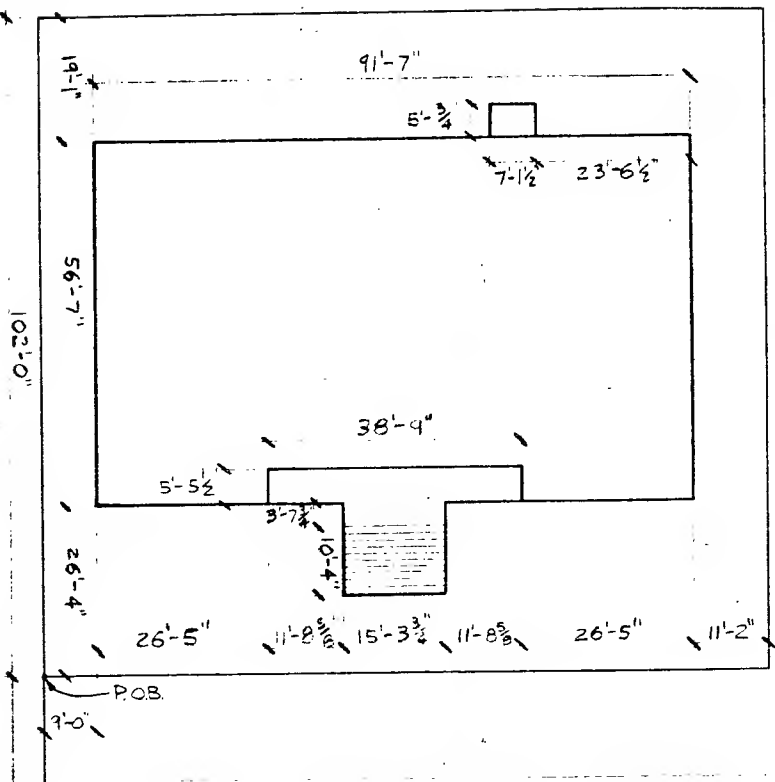
## Verbal Boundary Description:

south edge of Foster Avenue 251'-0". Then proceed due south 110'-3" to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.), continue due south on an additional 102'-0". Then proceed due west 111'-3"; then proceed due north 102'-0"; then proceed due east 111'-3" back to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.) which circumscribes an area roughly 102'-0" x 111'-3" containing the nominated building which is located in Jackson's subdivision of the southwest quarter (1/4) of Section 12, Township 40 North, Range 13 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Cook County, Illinois, north of the north branch of the Chicago River containing 11,347.5 square feet.

11'-3"

SCALE 1"=20'-0"

PLOT PLAN



P.O.B.

3'-0"

91'-7"

19'-1"

5'-3/4"

7'-1/2"

23'-6 1/2"

56'-7"

102'-0"

38'-4"

5'-5 1/2"

3'-7 1/2"

10'-4"

26'-4"

26'-5"

11'-8 5/8"

15'-3 3/8"

11'-8 5/8"

26'-5"

11'-2"

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Carlson, Leland H., A History of North Park College. Chicago: North Park College and Theological Seminary, 1941  
Olson, Ernst, W., The Swedish Element in Illinois. Chicago: Swedish American Biographical Association, 1917

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property LESS THAN ONE

Quadrangle name CHICAGO LOOP, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	6	1	4	1	1	8	0
Zone	Easting		Northing				

B 

Zone	Easting		Northing				

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point at the southwest corner of the intersection of Kedzie Avenue (3200 West) and Foster Avenue (5200 North) proceed west in a line parallel to the (See attached sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state not applicable      code      county      code

state      code      county      code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melvyn A. Skvarla for

organization North Park College

date April 16, 1981; Revised July 14, 1981

street & number 3450 West Bryn Mawr Avenue      telephone (312) 322-5540

city or town Chicago      state Illinois 60659

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national       state       local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Dave Kennedy*

title *Director*

date 9/25/81

For HCERS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Affest:

date

Chief of Registration

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered FEB 11 1992

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Dunham, Arthur J., House	Berwyn Cook County
Masonic Temple Building	Oak Park Cook County
Old Main Building	Chicago Cook County

Also Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy  
Honorable Alan Dixon  
Honorable Henry J. Hyde  
Honorable Frank Annunzio

For further information, please call the National Register at (202) 343-6404

272-3504